



National Congress Bulletin

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Memo to Local Presidents:

LAST MONTH in this column I described the democratic character of the Board of Managers and the Executive Committee of the National Congress, both of which are composed of representatives from the entire membership. I also described our method of electing national officers. Last month too Mrs. Jenkins, national chairman of the Committee on Legislation, described the procedures through which the Congress develops and adopts its program of legislation. Now I should like to discuss another democratic process—our way of working through standing committees.

Much of the work of the parent-teacher organization—local, state, and national—is carried out by committees. This in itself is typical of the way Americans work, for it enables many persons to participate and share responsibility. Authorization to create whatever committees are needed for our work is contained in the bylaws of local units, state branches, and the National Congress. Thus each state congress and local unit is free to establish necessary committees to carry forward its work. Small associations often **combine** under one chairmanship the work carried on by several committees in large associations. In order to provide an integrated program of work, state congresses create committees that correspond to the national standing committees, though the state committees may not be given identical names. They also create other standing committees, growing out of their own special needs, such as committees on centralized schools and rural service, music and art, civil defense, ways and means, councils, exhibits, student loans, and scholarships.

At intervals a special committee of the National Congress reviews the national committee organization and makes suggestions. As a result, for example, the work of the following committees has been combined: Radio and Tele-

vision, and Visual Education and Motion Pictures, into the Committee on Audio-Visual Services; Home and Family Life, and Parent Education, into the Committee on Parent and Family Life Education; and Founders and Programs Committees were combined to form the Committee on Programs and Founders day. When the Committee on Social Hygiene was discontinued, its work was assumed by the standing Committees on Health, and Parent and Family Life Education.

The Democratic Process in Action

• The democratic process in the work of National Congress standing committees begins with the method by which

their chairmen are selected. They are **nominated** by a committee of seven members elected by the National Board of Managers, which represents the whole membership. They are **elected** by a special electing group composed of the national officers and state presidents. This group also, as you can see, represents the whole Congress. State congresses and local units choose their own democratic method of selecting their chairmen and describe this method in their bylaws. The National Congress does not require them to adopt any particular procedure.

In a democratic organization, committees have no arbitrary powers. They are responsible to the group that creates them, and they have power only

(Continued on page 2)



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• Taken at the tea given by the Chatham County Council for the National Congress Executive Committee in Savannah, Georgia, January 1957. Left to right: Mrs. James C. Parker, first vice-president; Nelle Wood, school lunch consultant, Chatham County schools; Mrs. W. D. Perkins, seventh district director, Georgia Congress; Mrs. Rollin Brown, president; James H. Snowden, treasurer; Mrs. L. W. Alston, secretary; Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, second vice-president; Mrs. H. M. Kandel, past president of the Georgia Congress; Mrs. Ralph Hobbs, vice-president; W. A. Early, superintendent of Savannah schools; and Mrs. John D. Martin, president, Chatham County Council.

(Continued from page 1)

to carry out the plans agreed upon by that group. In the National Congress, each chairman of a standing committee is required to prepare a plan of work and submit it for approval to the Executive Committee. If a chairman wishes to change his plan of work later on—because the situation has changed or because he has new information—he must again submit the modified plan or a new one to the Executive Committee. At specified times or as requested, he submits reports of committee activities to the Executive Committee or the Board of Managers. He may make recommendations for action, which the Committee or Board may approve or disapprove. Thus committee activities are not dictated by one person or by two or three, but are determined by the informed judgment of a group that represents the whole Congress.

Patterns for Expansion

• The plan of work prepared by each national chairman is based on his study and knowledge of current needs throughout the country in his committee's particular area of parent-teacher work and on the current National Congress Action Program. It is the responsibility of each state chairman to study this plan and adapt it to the situation in his particular state. If, for example, a chairman knows that one of the objectives suggested by the national chairman has already been achieved in his state, he disregards it and concentrates on other objectives. Through talks with local groups and professional workers, and through his own experiences in local communities, he finds out the special problems and needs of his own state. Combining this information with suggestions from the national chairman's plan, he develops a state plan of work, tailor-made to his state's needs, and submits it to the state executive committee for approval.

Suggestions for the work of local unit committees are prepared also by national chairmen and are published in Section II of the *Parent-Teacher Manual*, with which you are all familiar. The local chairman and his committee study these suggestions, as well as those made by their state chairmen. Then they find out which things require special attention and effort in their own community and build a plan of work especially suited to the local situation. This plan the chairman submits to the executive committee of the P.T.A.

Just as federal and state agencies help communities to plan local public health, education, and welfare pro-

grams, so do state congresses and the National Congress help the local units to develop their programs. However, the state and National Congress do not tell the local unit what to do. The unit itself, after careful study of national and state suggestions and also of its community's needs, chooses its projects and activities. This is the democratic way. The only requirement, of course, is that programs be within the scope of parent-teacher work as defined in our Objects. The Objects are part of the bylaws of every association.

Lines of Communication

• National chairmen communicate frequently with their state chairmen, who in turn keep constantly in touch with districts and councils, and also with local units (either directly or through the councils and districts). Thus the national chairmen find out from the state chairmen, as well as from their own observation, what problems confront the local units. They hear also about how local units, councils, districts, and state branches are solving their various problems. This information they pass along to all the state chairmen, so that parent-teacher groups throughout the country can benefit from one another's experience. In addition, the national chairmen confer with experts and specialists to keep abreast of research and new developments, and they constantly are on the alert for information and materials that will be useful to state chairmen.

Through the national chairman of

each standing committee there is an interchange of information and ideas from all parts of the country.

This pooling of experience, know-how, information, and wisdom by all parent-teacher groups is democratic cooperation at its very best. Each chairman—local, state, and national—contributes what he knows in order that all may benefit.

Work for All

• There is another way in which the committee structure illustrates democracy in action. Committees give many people a chance to take part in activities and share responsibility. So broad is the scope of parent-teacher work that almost every kind of skill, talent, or ability can be put to use. Time itself in these busy days is a priceless thing, and the member who can give a few hours to making telephone calls, visiting new members, addressing post cards, or arranging for transportation has a real contribution to make.

United in a common purpose, sharing effort, responsibility, and fellowship, parent-teacher committees are indeed democracy at work, serving the family and the community for the benefit of children and youth.

Mrs. Rollin Brown

MRS. ROLLIN BROWN, President
National Congress of Parents and Teacher



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• Mrs. Brown accepts the American National Red Cross Certificate of Appreciation from Erle Cocke, Jr., member of the board of governors, during the meeting of the Executive Committee in Savannah, Georgia, January 1957.

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Mrs. Edith McBride
Cameron
Cooperation
with Colleges



Mrs. Duward Taylor
International
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Mrs. E. L. Church
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Mrs. Joel L. Burkitt
National Parent-
Teacher Magazine



Ralph H. Ojemann
Parent and Family Life
Education



Mrs. Aaron E. Margolis
Reading and Library
Service



Dorothea Lensch
Recreation

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Audio-Visual Services



Mrs. A. O. Haislip
Character and
Spiritual Education



Mrs. Albert Solomon
Citizenship



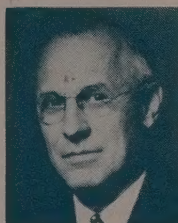
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Congress Publications



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Parent and Family Life
Education



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Preschool Service



Mrs. John E. Hayes
Programs
and Founders Day



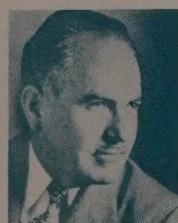
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Safety



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School Education

WORKING WITH THE PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION



► You saw the candid opinions of several school officials, mostly superintendents, on the school-P.T.A. relationship in the February issue of the *Bulletin*. This month, to highlight the reaction of a school principal, we bring you a letter written by the former editor of the *North Carolina Parent-Teacher Bulletin*, Mrs. Sam Ragan, in response to a thank-you letter from J. H. Melton, an elementary school principal. Mrs. Ragan's complete letter was published in *North Carolina Education*, journal of the N.C.E.A.

INSTEAD OF THANKING the P.T.A. for helping you, we should be thanking you for your cooperation. Nevertheless, it gave me a real lift today to get your letter saying "Thank you" for P.T.A. efforts in behalf of your school, and adding, "We pledge our interest in this important work and our best efforts in behalf of the work within this community." Sometimes, you know, the P.T.A. gets criticism rather than thanks! If all principals and other administrators felt as you do, we could help much more.

Since 1919 we have worked in North Carolina for objectives based on the premise that what is good and right for the most favored children is right and good for all children. As a cooperating member of the P.T.A., you have helped us work for these objectives. You, for one, know that the parent-teacher organization has helped provide better salaries and better housing for teachers, more money for buildings, better roads, and the development of public opinion favorable to educational progress.

NATIONAL CONGRESS BULLETIN

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The P.T.A. As an Asset

● You know, too, that a strong, vigorous, and effective P.T.A. can be an asset of tremendous value to any school. As a New York principal, Howard G. Spaulding, recently put it, "It can create good will, understanding, and friendliness where suspicion and ill will have flourished. It can create a demand for better buildings, equipment, and services and can help provide them. It can give support to all of the activities of the school. It can defend the school against attack and can improve the teachers' status."

"When the oncoming tide of youngsters hits the secondary schools in full force, some problems of very great difficulty will be created. More school buildings will be needed. Faculties and school budgets will have to be greatly increased; and services of the schools will have to advance with the tide."

"Without the general public understanding and support that can be achieved through a good P.T.A., bond issues for new buildings will be defeated. This means that class sizes will be increased, and that funds for supplies and equipment will be inadequate."

Not All School People Agree

● You would think that all administrators would recognize this fact as you do, Mr. Melton. But they don't. In some places in North Carolina there is no P.T.A. Occasionally there is a "parent-teacher group" . . . that works on a local level alone but is not connected with our state congress. Such an organization, of course, cannot have the guidance, leadership, or experience of a real P.T.A. and can wield little or no influence in state-wide public affairs.

Sometimes school administrators are afraid that the P.T.A. will "try to run the school." . . . We must admit that new, inexperienced P.T.A. members have occasionally been guilty of trying to interfere with the administration of schools. However, where this has happened, it may be attributed to lack of knowledge rather than to lack of good intentions. Our national policy, since the founding of our organization, has been noninterference in administration.

We feel that parents need to know the school's general objectives and how to help achieve them. They should be well acquainted with the program of

study, the program of recreation, extra-class activities offered, and objectives to be attained by them. They should fully recognize the teacher's special expertise, and they should instill respect for the school and its personnel in the mind of the child.

We think the teacher should recognize the individuality of the child and the part played in his development by home environment. A recent P.T.A. panel in North Dakota . . . agreed that: "Whenever parents and teachers get together and talk problems over, we get somewhere. We're all interested in the same subject—children. Progress cannot be made with teachers and parents talking among themselves as separate groups."

The attitude of the administrator at the school is equally important . . . There are many ways you can cooperate to help us help you. We can help by collecting book fees, by distributing free material for parent education, by chaperoning dances, by teaching good attitudes toward the school and the teachers. You can help us find good leaders and you can encourage our goals. Perhaps the most important thing you can do is to show us the need for action when problems must be solved.

Help Us To Help You

● You can help also by asking for advice on some of the school problems. It will please us to be consulted—we might have good answers. Remember that the children in your school are *our* children!

You can help by helping us retain our policies of being noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan; you can help us keep fund raising to a minimum.

We know a good P.T.A. means hard work, on your part as well as on ours. We are happy when you meet with our boards, and when you sit on the platform at our meetings. With your continued cooperation we can help build your school and promote our Objects, which, after all, are also your objectives.

(Signed) MARJORIE RAGAN

► Has your P.T.A. forwarded its state and national portions of all membership dues to the state treasurer?

THERE'S SOMETHING FOR *Everyone* IN CINCINNATI

MAY 19, 20, 21, 22

THE CONVENTION of the National Congress offers the kind of stimulation every P.T.A. member wants and needs. The 1957 convention has been planned with the individual delegate in mind—you and you and you.

Built on the theme "The Family and the Community: Each Shapes the Other . . . The P.T.A. Serves Both for Responsible Citizens in Resourceful Communities," the program will give you ideas and concrete information you can use in your own community—in your own P.T.A.

Well-known speakers with popular appeal will discuss trends and problems in fields closely allied with P.T.A. activities.

There will be a section on councils, where you can discover how to make any necessary improvements in your own council and how to look at its accomplishments with new appreciation.

Secondary school P.T.A.'s will be given special attention; you have been asking how to start a unit and how to increase the usefulness of units already in existence.

There will be time for what many delegates consider a most illuminating part of any convention: informal chats with officers, with chairmen, with delegates from widespread areas of the country, and with people who understand your problems and achievements because their interests are the same as yours.

A panoramic view of Cincinnati (see photograph) promises scenic attractions during your stay. The "City of Seven Hills" overlooks historic Ohio River. This city of more than a half million people offers possibilities for interesting trips—from the industrial "bottoms" area to the parks, museums, and schools. Restaurants, shopping, sports events, theater—all contribute to the popularity of Cincinnati as a convention city.

The headquarters hotel, where a number of convention events are scheduled, is the beautiful Netherland Hilton. General sessions will be held at the nearby Taft Auditorium.



• Above: View of Cincinnati from beneath the Ohio River suspension bridge that links the 1957 convention city to Covington, Kentucky.

• Right: Netherland Hilton Hotel, convention headquarters.

• Below: Taft Auditorium, where general sessions of the convention will be held.



**FOR
CONVENTION DETAILS
SEE APRIL BULLETIN**



BULLETIN BOARD

Brief Items of Current Interest



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● **THE HAZARDOUS ROUTE** to the Timber Lane School (Falls Church, Virginia) had been a source of anxiety to parents for a long time. Public funds for a sidewalk right of way just weren't available. But ceaseless efforts of the school's P.T.A. finally paid off when two citizens granted permission for temporary crossings to be laid over their land, and a crew of fathers, assembled by Col. Wayne Hinkle, P.T.A. president, spent a Saturday morning building fences and gates to hem in the new walkway. Timber Lane children now can get to school without walking in the street.

● **P.T.A. CONVENTION REACTIONNAIRE—1956.** That's the apt and descriptive title of a page of questions the January 1957 *Florida Parent-Teacher* directs to last year's state conventioners in a request for helpful ideas for the next convention. In addition to listing specific suggestions for improving another convention, former convention delegates were asked what features of last year's program they liked best or least, their ideas about lengths of meetings and presentations of subject matter, and so on.

● **LET'S LOOK AT COMICS**, a poster exhibit prepared by Mrs. Carroll Richardson and her committee in Hilo, Hawaii, has been getting around, according to the *Hawaii Congress Newsletter*. The display has been used in meetings by several Hawaiian P.T.A.'s, the Molokai district, the Molokai High School, and at a Sunday school convention in Honolulu. Mrs. Ralph L. Perkins, Hawaii Congress cultural director, also is well supplied with program ideas to go along with the exhibit.

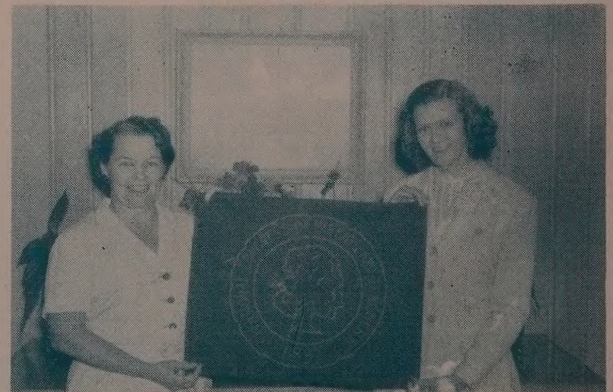
● **A LIST OF BOOKS** on child care and development available at the local library was compiled and published by the Ritzville (Washington) Preschool P.T.A.

● **A SPECIAL INVITATION** was extended to fathers in Homewood, Illinois, to visit school on Washington's Birthday. Since many places of business (but not the schools) were closed on that day, the P.T.A. reminded fathers that this was a good opportunity for them to observe their children at school. The invitations promised "no programs for father...no food for father...it will be just a normal school day."

● **THE KINDERGARTEN WORKSHOP** sponsored jointly by the Spokane (Washington) Council and the Spokane Kindergarten Association had a threefold purpose: to help kindergartens offer a more uniform program throughout the city, to serve as a guide for kindergarten teachers and answer their questions, and to help kindergarten leaders solve mutual organizational problems.

● **A NEWLY ORGANIZED CONGRESS UNIT** in Cuba had no distinctive name, because its navy based school likewise had no name. Now, however, the school has been christened with the name of a Spanish American War hero, and the local unit, which has 450 memberships, has recorded a new name in its bylaws—W. T. Sampson P.T.A.

● **RECREATION CLASSES**, to continue through spring and sponsored by the Nettelhorst School P.T.A. in Chicago, give adults opportunity to participate in varied recreational activities. The courses include dancing, contract bridge, fancy cookery, conversational French, and discussions of current affairs and the Great Books. Americanization classes also are on the schedule.



● A blue banner bearing a gold National Congress emblem flies below the American and state flags on Agnes Barden School P.T.A. (Macon, Georgia) meeting days. Displaying their banner here are (from left) Mrs. Doris Beacham, originator of the idea, and Mrs. Helen Raleigh, the craftsman.

Willing Recruit

The matter of getting equipment for equipment for shapes itself into this issue settled resulting problem suggest itself at little youngsters equipment. So swings were in Stuart School (N grounds, P.T.A. as recess time su teers, who were struction, soon warning they'd be cautious," had a psychology.

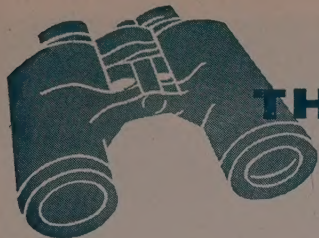
Parents of J.E. chapone Saturday sixth- and seventh- the young student manage.

Changing of the

Changing the gu distinctive and n Virginia P.T.A. that there's no de ing information, filed materials to men, the retiring president jointly house. In coo house—sometimes the "old guard" m informally and tra that have contribu success, recommen growths of past materials necessary

A Feather in Ma

The Maryland Co rate legislation res that offers a lot of in future years. county council in th man of legislation, could make a simil stems in each county and local school le and, as a result, m and know more abo methods than ever l



THROUGH OUR

Fieldglass

Field Staff: Ellen Dell Bieler • Dema Kennedy

Through Our Fieldglass is prepared from material gathered by members of the field staff
"on location."

Willing Recruits

The matter of getting proper playground equipment for elementary schools often shapes itself into quite a problem. With this issue settled, however, there is a resulting problem that doesn't always suggest itself at first thought—teaching little youngsters safe use of playground equipment. So when new slides and swings were installed on the J.E.B. Stuart School (Norfolk, Virginia) playgrounds, P.T.A. mothers were called in as recess-time supervisors. The volunteers, who were given preliminary instruction, soon discovered that the warning they'd heard, "Don't be over-cautious," had a basis in sound child psychology.

Parents of J.E.B. Stuart School also chaperone Saturday night canteens for sixth- and seventh-graders, functions the young students themselves plan and manage.

Changing of the Guard

Changing the guard is a phrase with distinctive and novel meaning to one Virginia P.T.A. Interested in seeing that there's no delay or slip-up in getting information, procedure books, and filed materials to new officers and chairmen, the retiring president and the new president jointly hold an all-day open house. In conferences at the open house—sometimes several at one time—the "old guard" meets the "new guard" informally and transfers to them ideas that have contributed to the P.T.A.'s success, recommendations that are outgrowths of past activities, and P.T.A. materials necessary for their jobs.

A Feather in Maryland's Cap

The Maryland Congress set up a first-rate legislation record last year, one that offers a lofty goal to live up to in future years. First of all, every county council in the state had a chairman of legislation, and most local units could make a similar claim. Working teams in each county stressed both state and local school legislation programs, and, as a result, more people in Maryland know more about school financing methods than ever before. This is the



• The Maryland Congress board of managers with Dema Kennedy (standing fifth from left in rear row), National Congress field staff member.

verdict of Mrs. Stanley G. Cook, state legislation chairman and a former (1946-49) national chairman of the Committee on Legislation.

Following an all-day workshop of council legislation chairmen and their counterparts from county teachers associations, held in the state office, every county council (except for one with other commitments) held its own workshop. Several counties also met in highly productive regional workshops. Dinner meetings, in cooperation with the Maryland State

Teachers Association, helped to bolster the cause; in every county parent-teacher representatives met with state legislators for informal discussions of education problems. Speakers bureaus were created in each county to spread information on Maryland's five-year legislation program about the state. This too was in conjunction with the state teachers association.

Thus was groundwork laid for the efforts that were to muster support for Maryland's important school construction bill, other legislative issues, and a six-point legislation program for improving and extending library services.

For Distinguished Service

When the District 3 conference of the Wisconsin Congress was held in Onalaska, a retiring educator and a zealous P.T.A. worker was honored for services she has given the parent-teacher organization. Miss Ollie Swanson, who leaves her superintendency July 1, can claim credit for the organization of numerous rural units and councils in the western part of Wisconsin. She has served on the district board in various capacities and was chairman of the state rural service committee. Not satisfied with the number of local units that have taken form in her school area—fifty-one—Miss Swanson hopes to see P.T.A.'s organized in all of her schools before she retires.



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• A meeting of the Maryland program committee on legislation is in session. Mrs. Cecil E. Ewing, first vice-president of the Maryland Congress, sits at the head of the table. At her left is Mrs. Stanley G. Cook, state legislation chairman. Mrs. Fred L. Bull, Maryland Congress president, is the first lady to be seen at the left of the picture.

MESSAGE TO STATE BOARD MEMBERS

from . . . Mrs. Newton P. Leonard,
Immediate Past President
National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

• How many **national life members** are there in your state? In checking over the roster, we find only one state that has none; one state with one; and one with two. Three state congresses have more than a hundred. Surely there are many citizens in each state who are making or have made worthwhile contributions to child welfare. Why not confer this high honor on them? The new National Life Membership certificate is a dignified, attractive symbol of respect and gratitude.

Remember too that every president of a state branch, like every other member of the National Board of Managers, contributes significantly to the welfare of all children as he promotes the program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. During national conventions a life member serving on the Board of Managers has the opportunity of joining a special gathering of other national life members. If you have neglected to confer this honor on a past state president, it's not too late to demonstrate your appreciation. Why not do it now?

Consider also that you might pay tribute to your leaders in child welfare, your educators, legislators, social workers, and doctors—all those persons who are striving to make this a better world for children. Honor them too by giving them a National Life Membership.

The National Life Membership fee is \$50 and money received from such fees is used to increase the Endowment Fund of the National Congress. Only the interest on the Fund is used. The principal accumulates and constitutes a stabilizing factor in the extension and development of parent-teacher work.

Correction: An oversight in proof-reading accounts for the fact that the immediate past president of the National Congress was not listed in the "Memo" of the February 1957 *National Congress Bulletin*. Please change the first paragraph under the subhead "The Board of Managers" (page 2) to read:

• The Board of Managers consists of the national officers, elected by the convention; the state presidents, elected at state conventions; the chairmen of national standing committees, who are elected by the national officers and the state presidents; and the immediate past president of the Congress, as provided for in the National Bylaws.

1957 RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTIONS to be acted upon by the 1957 national convention are now being accepted by the resolutions committee. Units and branches may send suggested resolutions to Resolutions Committee, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, 700 North Rush Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. To be considered, resolutions must be received not later than April 19, 1957.

The following members of the Executive Committee have been appointed by the preseedent to serve on the resolutions committee: Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, James H. Snowden, Mrs. T. H. Ludlow, Mrs. Louise S. Walker, and Mrs. Fred L. Keeler.

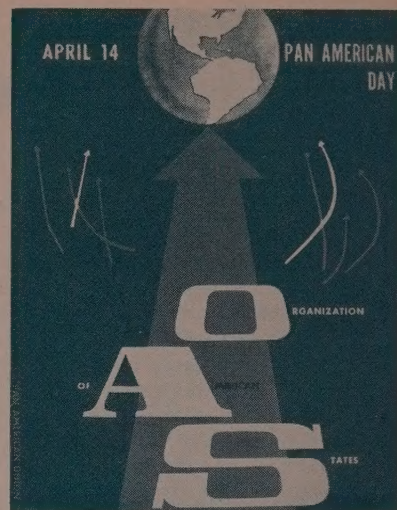
In accordance with *Policies and Practices* the resolutions committee shall submit to the annual convention such resolutions as may be determined by the Board of Managers after review by the Executive Committee.

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

On the Job, When It Counts

• When survivors from the wrecked *Andrea Doria* reached New York last summer, Red Cross volunteers were on the job—providing clothing for 1,000 persons, conducting emergency feeding for 5,000 on the piers, and handling more than 5,000 telephone and telegraph inquiries.

Aid to disaster victims, of which the emergency care given *Andrea Doria* survivors is only one example, is being particularly emphasized in this year's Red Cross membership campaign. Other vital areas of Red Cross service to be stressed are assistance to servicemen, veterans, and their families; the blood program; and health and safety programs. Because continued contributions are needed to carry on these services, this year's membership campaign theme is an invitation to "Join and Serve."



PAN AMERICAN DAY

• Although one special day is designated as Pan American Day, the Organization of American States suggests that schools, churches, clubs, and community organizations devote Pan American Week, April 8-14, to getting acquainted with neighbors "over the fence."

Along with its recommendations that characteristic music, dances, art, literature, and films be used as devices for learning the story of Pan Americanism, the O.A.S. announces a free Pan American Day packet, available from the Office of Public Relations, Pan American Union, Washington 6, D. C. It includes a three-color poster (11 inches by 14¼ inches); *Do It Yourself on Pan American Day*, an illustrated guide for program planners; *Calling the Youth of America*, a pictorial presentation of selected programs and projects; *The Pan American Story*, a brief description of the growth of Pan Americanism; and *American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man*, the text of the document subscribed to by twenty-one American republics.